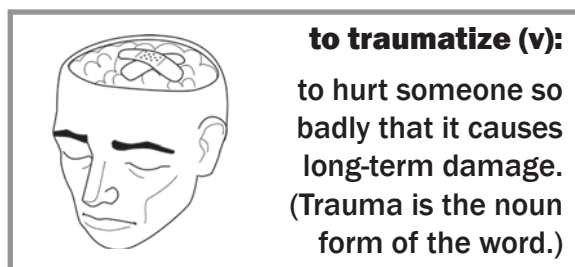


Rulers Are Not for Hitting

Yoonjung Kim

BEFORE YOU READ: What types of punishment did you receive in school? Look at the definition of the word “to traumatize” (in the box below). What types of punishments might traumatize students?



When I was seven years old, I was a confident student. I could read books and write letters, and I memorized the multiplication chart from one to nine before I went to first grade. I was a confident student because my ability was two years ahead of other classmates.

However, in high school, math got harder and math teachers were scary. When I made a

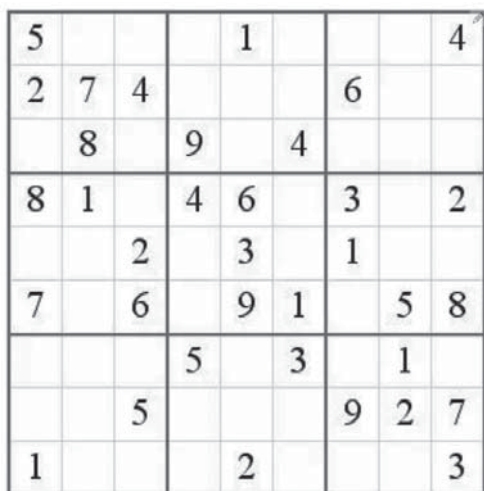
mistake, I got hit on the palm of my hand with a wooden ruler. This punishment hurt my hands; and even more, it hurt my feelings. This humiliation traumatized me, and I lost interest in math.



Thirty-five years later, I attend “Math for Life,” a math class for adults. Times have changed. We have rulers in class, but there is no chance the teacher will hit anyone with them! This class has three white boards (instead of one blackboard) and a big computer screen. Amazingly, every student is given a laptop computer to use at school.

We do math lessons online at our own pace. The teacher is there to help and give encouragement. I am not afraid to ask questions. The teacher also gives us fun games such as “Sudoku” and “Krypto.” I can play math with classmates, something I never imagined before. Now I have learned fractions, ratios, and percents. This is important for me because I will be a professional chef in the future. Do you want to know my average online score? It is 97% so far. How great I am in math!

AFTER YOU READ: How did Yoonjung’s relationship to math change over time. Use language to show the passage of time, such as: first, then, later, now, etc. Tell the story of your relationship to math. The story is still unfolding. What direction do you want it to go?



Try solving this Sudoku puzzle. The objective is to fill a 9x9 grid so that each column, each row, and each of the nine 3x3 boxes contains the digits 1 to 9.

Yoonjung Kim is a student at the Carlos Rosario Public Charter School in Washington, DC. She is taking Math for Life and studying for her dream job, to be a chef. One day, she wants to open her own Korean fusion restaurant. She says, “I get special lessons with my math teacher, and I am falling in love with math now.”